



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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Project Number: 3013899

Address: 431 Boylston Ave

Applicant: Bill Singer Environmental Works for Common Ground

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, January 09, 2013

Board Members Present: Wolff Saar (Chair)  
Ric Cochrane  
Lisa Picard

Board Members Absent: Dawn Bushnaq  
Chip Wall

DPD Staff Present: Lindsay King, Land Use Planner

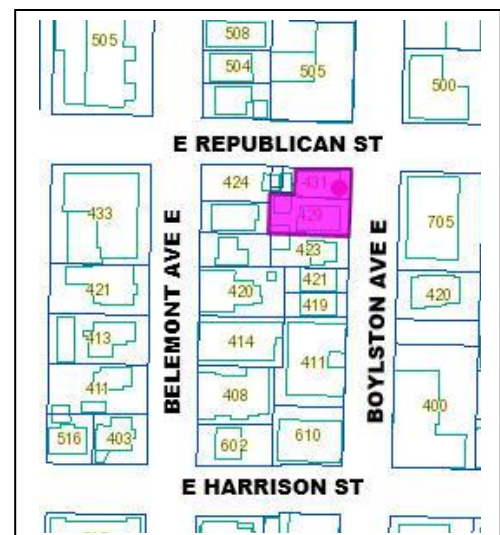
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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Midrise (MR)

Nearby Zones: (North) MR  
(South) MR  
(East) MR  
(West) MR

Lot Area: 7,051 sf



Current Development:	The subject site is located on the southwest corner of E Republican and Boylston Avenue E. The site consists of two lots, each containing an existing single family structure. From the southwest corner of the site, the lot grade slopes down 8 feet toward the southeast corner. A 42 inch exceptional Horse Chesnut tree is located near the center of the site along the west property line.
Access:	Vehicular access is available from E Republican Street and Boylston Ave.
Surrounding Development:	The neighborhood is characterized by small single family homes, low- and mid-rise apartment and condominium buildings, most of which date from the early to mid-twentieth century. Older buildings are typically 3-4 story brick structures, while later buildings tend to be wood frame or concrete structures, ranging from 3-5 stories. Recent developments are typically wood frame buildings, 4-6 stories in height. Most of these buildings occupy only one or two parcels, creating a fairly consistent scale of development throughout the neighborhood. Many of the existing buildings are set back from the street and from adjacent property lines, while others, particularly larger buildings, are built out to their property lines. Brick is the most common cladding material, particularly in older buildings, while later buildings are clad in a variety of materials including wood, brick, stone and concrete masonry.
ECAs:	None
Neighborhood Character:	The area is well served by transit and is developed with mostly higher density multi-family residential structures.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a six-story structure containing 45 units. Parking for 2-4 vehicles to be provided below grade.

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## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include the primary building entry centered on the Boylston Avenue facade. The common kitchen, dining and living room are proposed in the northeast street corner abutting E Republican and Boylston Ave E. Vehicular access is provided from E Republican Street to an underground parking garage.

The first scheme (Option A) showed the preferred option. The five story building is designed to maintain the exceptional Chestnut tree at the rear of the lot. The box shape of the massing is

oriented toward the northeast corner of E Republican Street and Boylston allowing for additional land area at the rear of the site to maintain the exceptional tree. Departures have been requested from front and street side setbacks along the north and east property lines. A side setback departure has been requested on the south property line above a height of 42 feet. A rooftop amenity space has been provided above the fifth floor level.

The second scheme (Option B) showed a five story building that removes the exceptional Chestnut tree at the rear of the lot. The massing alternative shows a code complying alternative that meets all required code standards. The box shape of the massing is located at the center of the site. A rooftop amenity space has been provided above the fifth floor level.

The third scheme (Option C) showed a six story building designed to maintain the exceptional Chestnut tree at the rear of the lot and meets all code requirements. The massing alternative shows a code complying alternative that meets all required code standards. The box shape of the massing is located at the center of the site. A rooftop amenity space has been provided above the sixth floor level.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

One member of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting and one comment letter was submitted after the meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Noted location of public dining room and living room, with proposed transparency on the street corner, is a departure from the typical residential typology in the neighborhood. Stated common room may function better at the top of building near the proposed rooftop amenity area.
- Felt the proposed material change application seemed arbitrary and did not relate to existing context. Felt the building may benefit from a strong first floor material expression transitioning to another material at upper levels, similar to the Viceroy Apartment building across the street.
- Encourage building design to respond to the exceptional tree. Noted the tree presented an opportunity for architectural expression such as a notch in the building facade or responsive window patterning.
- Suggested a pull-through/circle drive at lowest level under building for pick-up and drop-off of residents to limit street congestion and back-up warning sounds. Entrance may be located on Boylston and exiting on Republican or vice versa. Encourage an entrance inside the building for residents to get in/out of vans/vehicles.
- Discouraged front or side balconies (E Republican Street or Boylston Avenue).
- Suggested incorporating interior courtyard possibly above parking/drive area-not facing either Republican St. or Boylston for residents to congregate/smoke.
- Would like to see a garden provided in a courtyard area for residents to tend.
- Would like to see limited operability of windows on the upper levels for safety of residents.

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

### **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE:**

#### **1. Massing and Building Location**

The Board felt the preferred Massing Option A should move forward to MUP submittal with the following guidance:

- a) The Board would like to see the preferred massing option evolve to communicate a clear design parti. The Board noted the design parti should be harmonious with existing architectural context while also being sensitive to the proposed residential use within the building (C-1, C-2).
- b) The Board agreed Massing Option A provided the better design solution. By maintaining the exceptional tree at the rear of the lot and limiting overall building height, providing a better scale and proportion to the surrounding neighborhood structures (B-1, E-1).
- c) The Board noted the street setback departure requested along E Republic Street mirrors the setback across the street provided by the Viceroy. The Board stated the two buildings function as street corner book ends serving as a structured gateway for travelers heading west down E Republican Street (A-1, A-2, C-1).
- d) The Board supported the proposed setback departure request on Boylston Avenue. The Board acknowledged the façade location at the street property line is consistent with the majority of structures on the street, with the exception of the single family structure directly south. The proposed wall reinforces the existing spatial characteristic of the neighborhood context (A-2).

#### **2. Corner Treatment**

- a) The Board questioned the highly transparent corner treatment at E Republic Street and Boylston Avenue. The Board agreed the corner design should respond to the traditional neighborhood corner treatment, offering visual interest for pedestrians, respecting intended use of space, while also integrating into the overall architectural parti of the building (A-10, C-1, C-2).

#### **3. Boylston Avenue Façade**

- a) The Board preferred the wall treatment presented in the Façade Treatment 1 graphic (additional sheet provided at the meeting). The Board favors the use of standard brick as a material choice, used traditionally throughout the Capitol Hill neighborhood (C-1, C-4).
- b) The Board noted the proposed Façade Treatment 1 graphic includes additional modulation along the south property line which is not clearly shown in the preferred massing option. The Board recommended the applicant develop the

Boylston Avenue façade with a strong street wall, incorporating architectural and material framing around the primary residential entry. The façade should be designed consistent with Façade Treatment 1 rather than the stepped, recessing façade presented in the Preferred Massing Option (A-2, A-3, C-2, C-4).

- c) The Board felt the primary entry on Boylston should be designed with the same direction as the street corner. The first floor level should be resolved in the overall design parti while encouraging a strong entry point consistent with the design inspiration presented within the Early Design Guidance packet (C-2).

#### 4. Materials

- a) The Board was supportive of the standard brick material presented within the design package. The Board encouraged use of durable, quality materials respectful of existing materiality context of the established Capitol Hill neighborhood. The Board agreed the building's corner location plays a prominent role in the overall neighborhood context and should be designed and executed with attention to long term quality (A-10, C-4).
- b) The Board noted that all changes in material should be accompanied by a minimum 12 inch plane change (C-4).
- c) The Board felt the materiality design could progress in one of two directions. The building may utilize a robust material at the base level, transitioning with setback to another material at the upper floors, similar to the Viceroy. Alternatively one single durable material may be utilized for the entirety of the façade within a single plane (C-4).

#### 5. Tree

- a) The Board agreed the tree provided an opportunity to enhance the overall site development. The Board requested the applicant investigate ways in which the building architecture or site design may incorporate a deliberate and thoughtful response to the exceptional tree. Treatment may include, but is not limited to, window location, notch in building and quality landscape design (E-1).

The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

<b>A. Site Planning</b>
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**A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

**A-2 Streetscape Compatibility.** The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.
- Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.
- Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.
- Orient townhouse structures to provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.
- For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.
- New development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones. Examples include lots on Broadway that extend to streets with residential character, such as Nagle Place or 10th or Harvard Avenues East. While a design with a commercial character is appropriate along Broadway, compatibility with residential character should be emphasized along the other streets.

**A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street.** Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

**A-10 Corner Lots.** Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Incorporate residential entries and special landscaping into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.
- Provide for a prominent retail corner entry.

<b>B. Height, Bulk and Scale</b>
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**B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility.** Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

**Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:**

- Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.

- Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.
- Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

<b>C. Architectural Elements and Materials</b>
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**C-1 Architectural Context.** New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

**C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.** Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.
- Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.
- Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.
- Use materials and design that is compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.

**C-4 Exterior Finish Materials.** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Use wood shingles or board and batten siding on residential structures.
- Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.
- Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.
- Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.
- Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.
- The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.

## **D. Pedestrian Environment**

**D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas.** Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- Consolidate and screen dumpsters to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

## **E. Landscaping**

**E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites.** Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.

**E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site.** Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

**1. Setbacks (SMC 23.45.518 Table A):** The Code requires the following:

**Front Setback:** 7' average, 5' minimum

**Side Setback:** For portions of the structure below 42': 7' average, 5' minimum

For portions of the structure above 42': 10' average, 7' minimum

The applicant proposes to allow the proposed building to extend into the setbacks as shown in the diagrams in the [presentation packet](#).

The Board indicated favorably toward each setback departure. All departures have been requested to maintain an exceptional tree at the rear of the site (A-1, E-1). The preferred massing option is five stories rather than the code allowed seven stories, which is compatible



with existing neighborhood massing context (B-1). While the Board was supportive of the departures, they noted a number of items that will need to be resolved at the Recommendation Phase. The applicant will need to develop the architectural parti for the structure. The Board felt the first floor and street corner wall treatment must be developed to reflect the design parti while also being sensitive to the proposed residential use. The Board would like the applicant to demonstrate how the proposed application of material will reinforce the parti while also being responsive to existing neighborhood context.

**Street Side:** A departure has been requested to locate the building at zero lot line along E Republican Street property line, within the required 5 foot minimum, 7 foot average street side setback. The Board felt that the departure request for the street level setback on E Republic Street responds well to the existing neighborhood context provided by the Viceroy building across the street (C-1). By locating the wall at the street property line the two buildings provide street corner book ends that frame the pedestrian experience heading west (A-2).

**Front:** A departure has been requested to locate the building at zero lot line along E Boylston street property line within the 5 foot minimum, 7 foot average front setback. E Boylston Street contains a number of buildings constructed at the street property. The proposed façade maintains the existing street wall context (A-2).

**Interior Side:** The applicant has required and interior side setback reduction of 18 inches above 42 feet in height is supported by a design that maintain a consistent wall line from ground to roof which is required to maintain architectural consistency along the façade (C-2).

- 2. Structure Building Overhang (SMC 53.035):** The Code requires a minimum setback along each street property line thereby prohibiting use of structural building overhangs. The applicant had presented a street wall design alternative (Façade Treatment 2) which includes bay window projections into the right-of-way.

The Board preferred the clarity and uniform treatment of Façade Treatment 1 and was not supportive of departure requests for structural building overhangs.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

**At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.**